

Pyramid Pack contents

Forward from Bronach Hughes (ContinYou Emotional Health and Well-being Manager)

Forward from Howard Goodall (National Singing Ambassador)

Introduction to your Pyramid Activity Pack

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sing up
Help kids find their voice



continyou
Changing lives through learning

Singing Pyramid Clubs

Using our combined knowledge of singing and Pyramid Clubs, **Sing Up** and **ContinYou** have joined forces to create this fantastic, practical singing resource. We have worked hard to create an activity pack that can be used time and again to bring the benefits of singing into your club.

Bronach Hughes

ContinYou Emotional Health and Well-being Manager

For more information about Pyramid Clubs, visit www.continyou.org.uk/pyramid

Singing is great! It's something everyone can do together, no matter who they are, what language they speak, how big or small they are or what mood they began the day in. It is now scientifically proven to accelerate the processing power of the brain, especially when we are young, and it's even so good for our physical and mental health that it is now being prescribed by some doctors instead of pills!

I have heard so many amazing stories about the transforming power of singing - in fact, the inspiration for asking the government to invest in a National Singing Programme, Sing Up, came from schools all over the country where singing had brought about seemingly miraculous changes for the better. We wanted all schools to be able to benefit from quality group singing, not just a few. Schools where children's learning, concentration, self-esteem and attitude to each other improved dramatically after they began singing together every day. From boys who were considered 'trouble makers' to children with special educational needs, finding their voice has been a catalyst to their personal, social, educational and musical development.

Recently I was told of a child who had become traumatised and voluntarily mute - teachers had tried so many ways in which to engage the child in class to no avail. Then a singing project began in the school and over the next few weeks the child took more and more interest in what was going on and by the end of the project was singing with the rest of their class. In another school a pair of Polish children who had joined a class on arrival in England had initially struggled with the language and - not surprisingly - they felt lonely and excluded. The teacher found a Polish song on the Sing Up Song Bank and asked the two pupils to help her to teach it to everyone else. Being given a leadership role empowered these children and helped the rest of their class to understand better the difficulty of learning a new and strange language - the song brought everyone together.

This Sing Up Pyramid Pack provides a toolkit for leaders to use singing in simple yet effective ways to engage and develop children who need additional encouragement to be more confident in their everyday lives. The 10 songs on the CD come from the Sing Up Song Bank, and there are over 300 more to discover! Although there is every possibility that one or more of the children who participate in a Singing Pyramid programme will go on to pursue a career as a singer, it is my belief that all those who take part in singing activity such as this will gain many valuable life skills and of course have a lot of fun on the way!



Howard Goodall

National Singing Ambassador

Songs for Pyramid Clubs

We have chosen ten songs to get you started, each of which has a special relevance to Pyramid Clubs' ten week programme of activity. You can listen to each of the songs on the accompanying CD and the lyrics for each track are printed at the end of the booklet. There are ten songs and ten weeks of Pyramid Club, so there is the potential to learn a new song each week. However, each club and each group of leaders and children will be different, so use the songs that best meet the needs of the group, provide fun and reassurance for the children, and encourage everyone to sing. Some groups will want to repeat a small number of the songs over and over, while others may want to do new songs each time.

How to include singing as part of your Pyramid Club

Singing has always been one of the recommended activities at Pyramid Clubs but some club leaders may lack the confidence or knowledge to lead it on a regular basis. However, the benefits to children and to the club can be enormous. Singing as a group brings everyone together, in a fun, disciplined and energetic way. There can be a direct link between the club and a child's home environment when children use the songs they have learnt at home. This can be through humming a tune, or singing a song to the rest of their family. Club leaders can feel satisfied that they've made a positive impact. Sharing songs together helps to bond a group, providing fun, uplifting and creative moments to enjoy immediately as well as later, when reflecting back on the club.

This resource will hopefully inspire club leaders and give them the confidence to try more singing, thereby enabling all Pyramid Clubs to experience the benefits of singing. Singing can:

- **Improve confidence** - Singing is a great way to boost self-esteem. It takes confidence to stand up and sing in front of other people, and regular singing will help to build that confidence.
- **Be healthy** - Singing gives you a great cardio-vascular workout, reduces stress and protects you from getting ill by boosting your immune system.
- **Help you learn** - Singing uses all parts of the brain and develops your memory and recall skills.

- **Make you feel good** - Singing reduces stress, releases endorphins and is an enjoyable activity.

- **Bring people together** - Singing is one of the few things we can all do together: children, parents, teachers, volunteers, everyone! Singing together can be particularly positive for those who are very quiet or for whom English is a second language.

- **Be cool** - Children and young people love music and kids will always dream of being rock stars or performing on stage.

So what are you waiting for? In the next few pages you will find everything you need to turn your club into a Sing Up Pyramid Club!

Getting started

Be prepared

Decide who is going to lead the song, make sure the other leaders have had a chance to listen to it and understand their role in performing it, and have the CD player ready to go. The more comfortable the club leader is with the music and the words, the better.

Focus on the singing

It can be really difficult to concentrate if there are other distractions going on, so make sure you focus on the singing activity, with the whole group starting and finishing together.

Think about the space

Make sure that the space is suitable for children to sing and move around and that you will not be interrupted in mid-flow by complaints from other groups or individuals. Think about how the space can reflect a safe environment for the children, particularly if they feel unconfident in the first few weeks about using their voice in front of others. Try to ensure that the space isn't interrupted by other children or adults as this can be quite off-putting.

Ensure everyone is involved

You may find that the children initially need to have access to the song words. However, it is always great to encourage children to learn a song 'off by heart', rather than relying on the words being in front of them. Repetition is the key here and by revisiting songs it makes it easier for children to remember them. If you feel that the children's enjoyment is diminished because they are struggling to remember the words, you could distribute the lyrics to club leaders, who can help with reading the words, learning the tune, and performing the actions. Remember that it is much easier to follow the actions of someone alongside you than trying to reverse those of a leader who is facing the group. Don't ever try to force a child to join in with the singing – lots of gentle encouragement will be more effective in the long term.

Keep it simple

When you first start, keep it short and snappy. You may have limited time, so make sure games and songs are short and easy to learn. You can always build up to more complex songs over several weeks. Remember the accompanying Sing Up CD and online resources offer a huge number of easy to use, appropriate songs and games. And they're all free! You may find that some of the children will already know some of the songs through their school's involvement with Sing Up.

Don't jump in cold

Start off with some games and warm ups (you'll find some ideas on the activity sheets included in this resource). These will break the ice, help everyone relax and engage the children, even those who are initially wary.

Show that you're enjoying yourself!

As a leader, don't hold back; if you are confident and having fun, the children will enjoy the experience more. A less competent but lively leader is better than a more competent dull one.

Start with these special songs and then branch out

Use the Sing Up Pyramid Activity Pack to get started: we have picked a selection of songs that are particularly relevant to Pyramid Clubs and children to get you started, and the backing tracks will help you all to learn them. However, in the longer term you can try to encourage singing without backing music, and you can sing other songs from the Sing Up Song Bank or from other sources you find. The activity sheets in the pack will give you specific ideas about using the songs, adding actions, providing alternative song suggestions, and so on. Songs are an essential part of all cultures, so perhaps get the children to teach you their favourite songs. You could even develop your own special club song!

Top tips for introducing singing to your Pyramid Club

It's a rap

Rap and rhyme are great ways to encourage children to sing. Check out **Boom chicka boom** on the Sing Up website www.singup.org.

Follow the leader

Once you have got them started ask the children if they want to lead. Call and response songs enable a group to follow another child's lead.

Don't be afraid

Solo singing can be intimidating to begin with, especially for children who are naturally quiet or anxious, and group singing is comforting and fun. But don't hold back from encouraging children to lead and perform solos. We've devised the activities so that these skills are gradually introduced in an enjoyable and non-threatening way.

Ask no questions

Don't ask 'who wants to sing a song?' (You may get the answer 'no-one!'). Instead, say that you are all going to play a fun game. This usually gets children up and engaged in the activity.

Singing is free!

Your voice is your instrument and can be used inside or outside the classroom setting. Be imaginative!

Something for the boys

Singing is for everyone and the songs chosen for this activity pack are suitable for boys and girls. There is a wider range of songs on the Sing Up website that will appeal to all tastes.

Singing partners

At ContinYou and Sing Up we recognise and value the benefits of working in partnership. In your community there are probably a wide range of people who might be able to help make your plans become a reality. Think about who you could partner up with to provide singing opportunities in your Pyramid Club.

- Parents/volunteers from the local community may be able to teach songs from those communities.
- The primary school you are based at may already have pledged to their Sing Up Awards journey. Using this activity pack and singing as part of your Pyramid Club will actually support their Awards journey. Find out if the school has a Sing Up Awards Champion and tell them all about how you want to start singing as part of the club.
www.singup.org/awards
- Your Sing Up Area Leader will be able to talk with you about training opportunities to support the development of singing in your club.
www.singup.org/training
- Community organisations: there are so many organisations that are involved in singing and music making. From local church choirs to amateur dramatic groups or community musicians and choral societies, most areas are teaming up with experienced singers.

Singing doesn't just benefit children and young people but can be hugely rewarding to all those who get involved. Teachers, pupils, parents, carers and communities can all benefit from getting involved in singing.

Some final tips before you start

- **Do** warm-ups before you sing. Focus on different body actions, your posture, your breathing and preparing your voice.
- **Do** perform to other people. An audience will give you a buzz and make you want to sing your best.
- **Do** try singing in a variety of formations. Stand next to different people and try new places to perform – even outside.
- **Do** make your performances memorable. Work on co-ordinated actions and presentation.
- **Don't** accept it when people tell you they can't sing. Everyone has a voice and everyone's voice is to be valued.
- **Don't** shout a song, however much you love it. Always aim for a good singing tone.

Don't forget that singing is good for you... and never stop singing!



Biographies

Bronach Hughes – Introduction

Bronach is the Emotional Health and Well-being Manager for ContinYou which includes responsibility nationally for the Pyramid project. She has worked on Pyramid for over eight years and is passionately committed to the aims and ethos of Pyramid, having witnessed herself the incredible changes it can make to some children's lives. Bronach works regularly with groups of children through her involvement in Girlguiding UK. One of her personal interests is singing: as well as singing in a choir herself, she regularly leads singing with her Brownies and Guides, and so jumped at the opportunity of developing a special singing pack for Pyramid Clubs in conjunction with Sing Up!

Jessica Curry – Activity sheets

Jessica Curry is a composer and music educationalist who has worked as a freelancer in a variety of settings over the last ten years, including projects with the RNIB, the National Autistic Society, The Royal Society of Arts, Sure Start, Partnerships for Learning, Music for Autism and Art Through Touch. She is the composer of the Connections music resource (**www.connectionsmusic.co.uk**), a double CD set of original music, songs, stories and games written specifically for children with special needs, particularly autism. She also works as an advisor to Sing Up, focusing on their Beyond the Mainstream programme. Key to her work is the belief that music is a potent tool for enhancing learning and that it plays a vital role in supporting educators.

Acknowledgements:

I'm gonna be your friend

Words and Music by Chris Williams
© 2001 Chris Williams & Concern

I'm gonna be your friend features on www.foodaid.org.uk. Written by Chris Williams – info@ps-37.net

Jungle song

Words and Music by Christopher Wortley with input from the students of the Royal School for Deaf Children, Margate
© 2008 Wortley

Good to be me

Music by Phil Needham and Geraldine Gaunt
Lyrics by Mel Barber
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Taken from **SEAL Songs in Action Key Stage 1** and **SEAL Songs in Action Key Stage 2** available from Music Education Supplies www.mesdirect.com T. 08450 264 703

You can do it

Music by Phil Needham and Geraldine Gaunt
Lyrics by Mel Barber
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Taken from **SEAL Songs in Action Key Stage 1** and **SEAL Songs in Action Key Stage 2** available from Music Education Supplies www.mesdirect.com T. 08450 264 703

Hello, hello

Words and Music by Niki Davies
© 2003 Out of the Ark Music, Surrey KT12 4RQ

Taken from **It's time to fly**, Out of the Ark Music

I'm OK!

Words and Music by Mark and Helen Johnson
© 2003 Out of the Ark Ltd, Surrey KT12 4RQ

Taken from **Songs for EVERYbody**, Out of the Ark Music

I once saw an elephant

Words and Music by Vo Fletcher
© 1990 Early Birds Music

Taken from **Spaceman Sid's Action Songs**, Early Birds Music

Bright blue sky

Words by Franzeska Ewart
Music by Alison Burns
© Franzeska Ewart/Alison Burns

Taken from **Rickety Ticky**, Scottish Arts Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council

Baby one, two, three

Traditional Trinidadian
Used by permission of The Sage Gateshead

Nobody loves me

Traditional
Used by permission of A&C Black Publishers Ltd.

Taken from **Sonsense Nongs**, A&C Black

Audio credits:

The songs featured on the activity sheets and on the enclosed CD are available on www.singup.org, where you can also access and print a full piano arrangement. Track details for the CD are as follows:

- **Baby one, two, three** (Tracks 19&20) was recorded specially for the Sing Up programme by the North East Children's Choir, mixed and mastered by Nic Rowley at Vandborg Studios. The backing track was created specially for the Sing Up programme by Ned Bennett.
- **Bright blue sky** (Tracks 7&8) was recorded specially for the Sing Up programme by Finchley Children's Music Group (www.fcmg.org.uk), mixed and mastered by Nic Rowley at Vandborg Studios. The backing track was created specially for the Sing Up programme by Simon Rogers.
- **Good to be me** (Tracks 13&14) and **You can do it** (Tracks 9&10) were recorded and produced by Geraldine Gaunt and Phil Needham, with vocals performed by Zoe Dunphy, Geraldine Gaunt and Phil Needham.
- **Hello, hello** (Tracks 1&2) was used by permission of Out of the Ark Music (www.outoffheark.co.uk), sung by the Out of the Ark Choir, produced by Dave Bankhead and Mark Johnson and recorded at Moonstone Studios, Wiltshire.
- **I once saw an elephant** (Tracks 3&4) was recorded specially for the Sing Up programme by Fulham Prep School Chamber Choir (www.fulhamprep.co.uk), mixed and mastered by Nic Rowley at Vandborg Studios. The backing track was created specially for the Sing Up programme by Simon Rogers.
- **I'm gonna be your friend** (Tracks 5&6) was recorded specially for the Sing Up programme by the children's choir provided by Jam Theatre Company (www.jamtheatre.co.uk), mixed and mastered by Ron Knights at www.mediagrove.com. The backing track was created specially for the Sing Up programme by Ned Bennett.
- **I'm OK!** (Tracks 15&16) was used by permission of Out of the Ark Music (www.outoffheark.co.uk), sung by the Out of the Ark Choir, mastered by Denis Blackham at Skye Mastering.
- **Jungle song** (Tracks 11&12) was recorded specially for the Sing Up programme by Finchley Children's Music Group (www.fcmg.org.uk), mixed and mastered by Nic Rowley at Vandborg Studios. The backing track was created specially for the Sing Up programme by Christopher Wortley.
- **Nobody loves me** (Tracks 17&18) was recorded specially for the Sing Up programme by St Joseph's Preparatory Choir (www.st-josephs.reading.sch.uk) and the Academy of Contemporary Music (www.acm.ac.uk), mixed and mastered by Ron Knights at www.mediagrove.com. The backing track was created specially for the Sing Up programme by Ben Tompsett.

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